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THE EARTH AND ITS PRODUCTS.

THE painting from which the engraving now before the reader is copied is by Nicholas Lancret, a celebrated painter of the French school. It is entitled "The Earth," which title doubtless owes its origin to such georgics as Virgil and other poets have composed. A verse under an old engraving from this picture tells us that "the earth is the mother of every blessing, but that it is only by the labour of her children that she will yield her increase;" and this, in true courtly style, Lancret has pictured out in his design. At the foot of an elegant fountain sit a marquis and a high-born lady, enjoying the pleasures of the field and admiring a bunch of flowers. Behind this couple, another company, that might possibly pass for the Graces in the dresses of ladies of fashion, are arranging a large supply of the richest fruits; while another lady stands under the branch of a fruit-tree to receive in her robe other gifts of Pomona. Standing on a ladder, and gathering the fruit, is one who is doubtless another marquis, in the disguise of a peasant. The two gardeners, one digging the earth, and the other watering the plants, we may regard as lords or viscounts, for there is over all the picture that air of elegant refinement which forbids all notion of plebeian rustics. The instruments of labour are beautiful in form, and designed with the utmost amount of taste. We look in vain for Hodge the ploughman, or Mabel with her shining sickle; these are metamorphosed into the denizens of palace courts, and, in place of a delightful landscape, we have trees arranged with all the skill of modern gardening, and an elegant marble fountain supplied from the waters of Versailles. Art is contrasted with nature, and the charm of the country is sacrificed to the taste of the age. Against this some have protested. Diderot launched out against it as "a factitious and degenerate school of art." He says, the depraved state of colouring, characters, expression, and drawing, "has followed, step by step, the depraved state of public morals."

In the preface which Saint Lambert attached to his poem of "The Seasons," we find an elaborate dissertation on the union of pastoral life with the gallantry of the court, which was the fashion in France during the most brilliant period of the last century; but Saint Lambert only saw nature in his own beautiful gardens, as viewed from the windows of his chateau, and Lancret illustrated Lambert. Apart, however, from these criticisms, the picture is very beautiful, and affords sufficient indication of what the painter could accomplish. In some of his productions he fell into the fashion of the times; but the design and execution are both admirable, the groups are tastefully arranged, and there is an air of surpassing grace over the whole composition. More than this, the painting is a fair sample of Lancret's peculiar style of art.

NICHOLAS LANCRET was born at Paris in 1690. After studying painting under several masters, he at length became intimate with Watteau, whose friendship he cultivated, and whose style he adopted. This evident imitation of the great master is seen in all the works of his talented disciple, but still each has retained his own distinguishing characteristics, as may be observed by comparing their varied productions.

In 1793, Lancret was received into the Academy, under the title of the *Peintre des fêtes galantes*. He was the favourite of fortune, and rose rapidly to high renown. The court patronised him, and the king admitted him to his councils; he frequented the saloons of the bravest, the wisest, and the wittiest, and was everywhere distinguished by the highest tokens of approbation. He was one of the gayest gallants of the time, and his life was passed in the brightest sunshine of prosperity. But death will come, even into kings' palaces, and at the age of fifty-three Lancret died. He left no children.

The title of *Peintre des fêtes galantes*, characterises the talent of Lancret. He painted nature, but it was nature adorned, arranged, and coloured after the most approved style of fashion—nature, such as one sees at the opera. He manufactured an artificial nature, made up of all the elegances of a well ordered garden, "a painted pasteboard, varnished, and

perfumed nature, with rouge for a complexion and powder for hair." Like his friend Boucher, he seems to have lived and died in a boudoir hung with rose-coloured silk; and indeed when that painter assured him that nature was too green and too badly lighted, Lancret replied, "I concur in your sentiments, nature is wanting in harmony and attraction." He painted what he conceived nature *ought* to be, and his figures too often resembled marionettes.

FORGIVE AND FORGET.

FORGIVE and forget—it is better
To fling every feeling aside
Than allow the deep cankering fetter
Of revenge in thy breast to abide;
For thy step through life's path shall be lighter,
When the load from thy bosom is cast,
And the sky that's above thee be brighter
When the cloud of displeasure is past.

Though thy spirit swell high with emotion
To give back an injustice again,
Let it sink in oblivion's ocean,
For remembrance increases the pain.
And why should we linger in sorrow,
When its shadow is passing away?
Or seek to encounter to-morrow
The blast that o'erswept us to-day?

Oh, memory's a varying river,
And though it may placidly glide
When the sunbeams of joy o'er it quiver,
It foams when the storm meets its tide.
Then stir not its current to madness,
For its wrath thou wilt ever regret;
Though the morning beams break on thy sadness,
Ere the sunset forgive and forget.

MONKEYS.

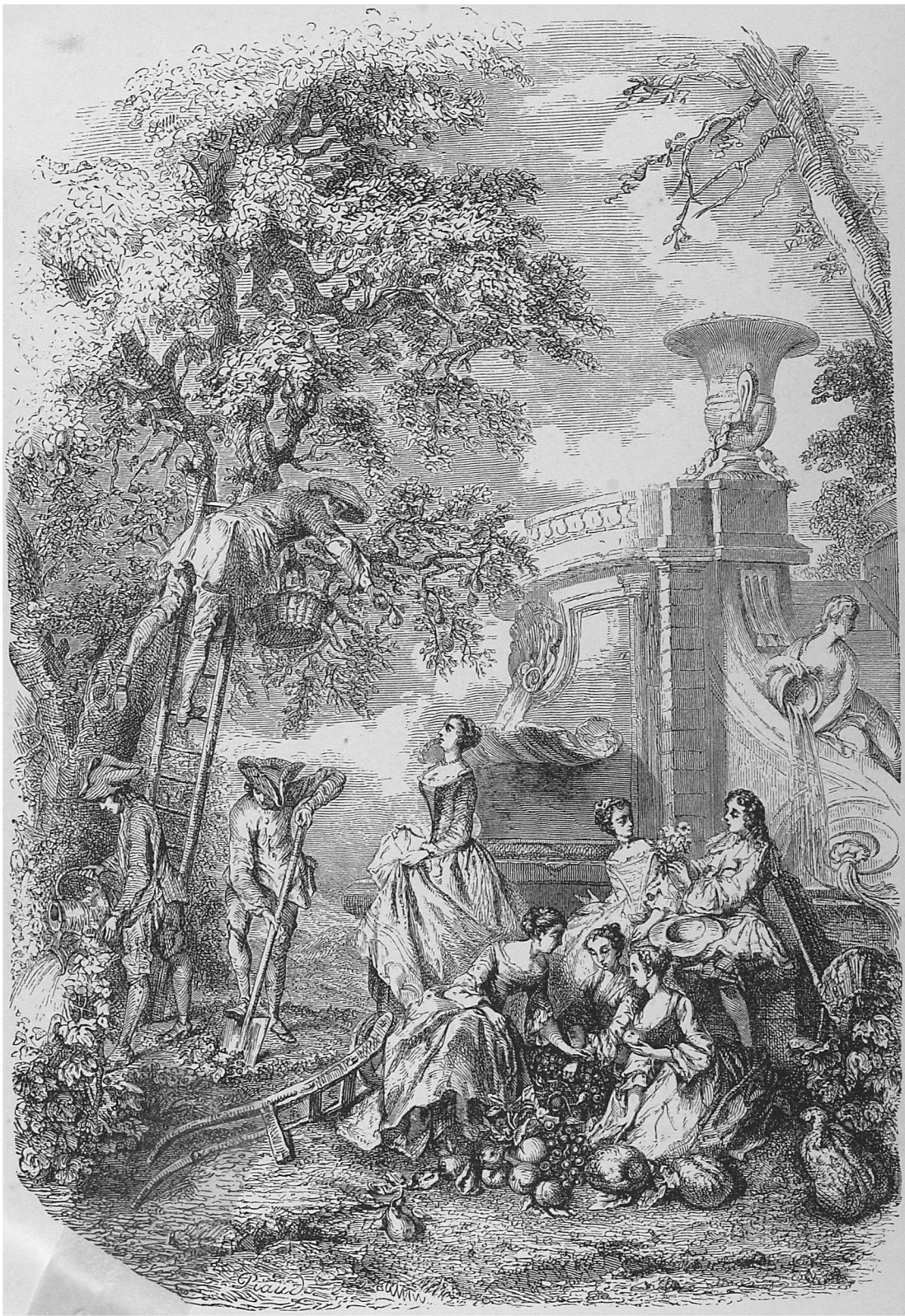
"Meddling monkey—busy ape."—*Shakspeare*.

WHOEVER is familiar with the travelling menageries, — once the almost exclusive depositories of Natural History, — and especially with the invaluable collections of our Zoological Gardens, need not to be informed that large, interested, and amused groupings take place continually, about the receptacles of the monkey tribes. In writing in reference to them, therefore, we feel that our subject is an attractive one, and we offer it as an appendage to those personal observations which, happily, vast multitudes of the community have such abundant opportunity to enjoy and improve.

If any one now addressed will take down an atlas, open it at Europe, which forms a page of it, and then place a finger on the rock of Gibraltar, the only spot will be touched in this great division of the globe, where any one of these creatures is found in a wild state. The Barbary ape, an aboriginal of the opposite coast of Africa, appears to have become naturalised there; the present race being descended, most probably, from individuals which, at some period, have escaped from confinement, or have been purposely introduced.

The genus *Simia*, as naturalists designate the ape and monkey tribes, are exclusively confined to the warmer latitudes of the old and new continents, thronging in multitudes the deep forests of the torrid zone, and occasionally wandering into the more cultivated portions of the adjacent districts for fruits or grain.

New Holland, abounding with singular animals, has no monkeys, and they are as yet unknown in the Island of Madagascar. The monkeys of the *Old* and *New* World are, therefore



THE EARTH.—FROM A PAINTING BY LANCRET.